

Report on the Health Status of Older Adults

Yuma County, Arizona

Established by the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), the Healthy Aging 2010 project focuses on issues related to health promotion and disease prevention in older adults. While the older adult population in Arizona is living longer, older adults are not necessarily living healthier lives. Chronic diseases often occurring in conjunction with emotional health problems are the most prevalent yet preventable health problem in the State. An analysis of available indicators of older adult health provides information for planning and community initiatives. The following information and data describe the current health status of adults 65 years of age and older living in Yuma County.

Population Characteristics

Table 1 presents information about the characteristics of older adults living in Yuma County, as compared to Arizona and the United States. The 2001 population figures were estimated based on the 2000 U.S. Census. Approximately 17% of the total population in Yuma County is over the age of 65, compared to 13.0% for the state and 12.4% for the United States. For all regions, the proportion of females is higher than males within the 65 and older age group.

TABLE 1: POPULATION ESTIMATES * FOR 2001

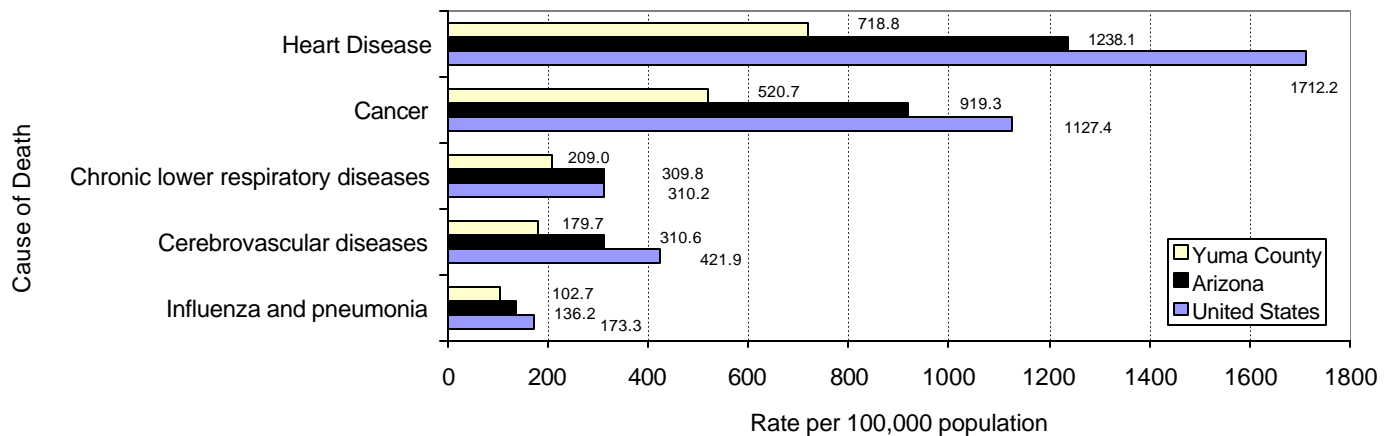
	Yuma County	Arizona	United States
Total Population	164,942	5,307,331	284,796,887
Age 65+ Population	27,269 (16.5%)	690,995 (13.0%)	35,411,395 (12.4%)
Gender, Age 65+			
Male	13,416 (49.2%)	306,535 (44.4%)	14,582,434 (41.2%)
Female	13,853 (50.8%)	384,460 (55.6%)	20,828,961 (58.8%)
Race/Ethnicity, Age 65+			
Caucasian, non-Hispanic	22,673 (83.1%)	599,209 (86.7%)	29,595,582 (83.6%)
Hispanic	3,883 (14.2%)	57,413 (8.3%)	1,754,381 (5.0%)
African American	235 (0.9%)	10,053 (1.5%)	2,856,805 (8.1%)
American Indian	208 (0.8%)	14,360 (2.1%)	140,099 (0.4%)
Asian	144 (0.5%)	6,454 (1.0%)	810,399 (2.3%)
Other	136 (0.5%)	3,506 (0.5%)	254,130 (0.7%)

*Estimates calculated based on the 2000 U.S. Census

Mortality and Hospitalizations

The five leading causes of death among adults age 65 and older in Yuma County for 2001 are shown in Figure 1. Since national death rates are not currently available for 2001, U.S. preliminary death data for the year 2000 are included in the figure for the purpose of a general comparison. For all categories, Yuma County reported lower death rate than the state in 2001, with the largest difference in rates due to heart disease, in which Yuma County reported 42% lower death rate than Arizona in 2001. Among older adults in all regions, heart disease and cancer are the leading causes of death. Lung cancer claimed the most lives countywide and statewide in 2001. Yuma County again reported a lower death rate than the state, with 33% lower rate in 2001 due to lung cancer.

FIGURE 1: FIVE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG ADULTS AGE 65 AND OLDER; MORTALITY RATE PER 100,000



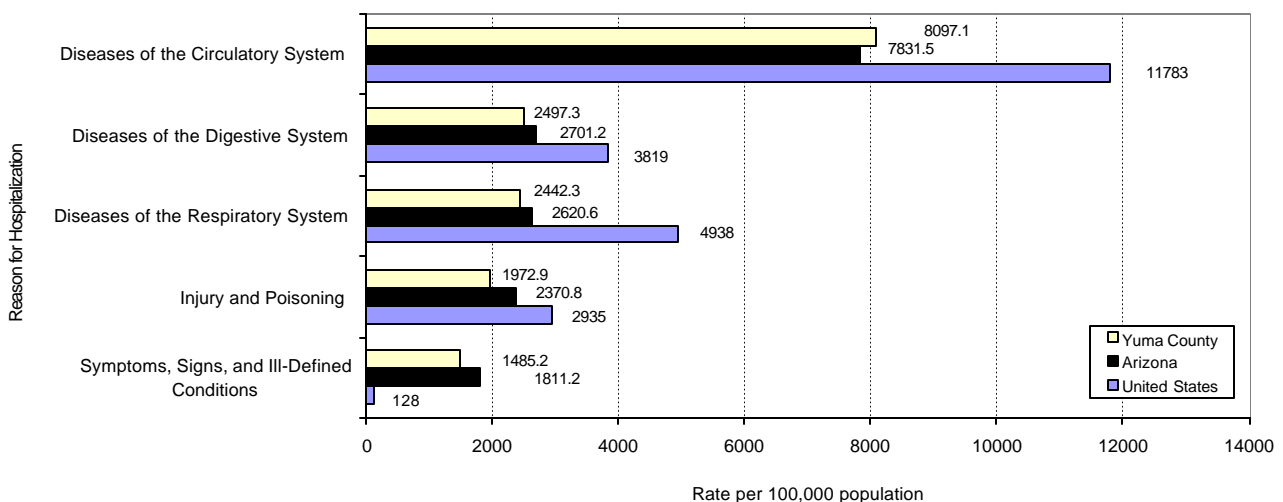
Source: Advance Vital Statistics Report. Arizona Department of Health Services: 2001.

Note: Corrections have been made to reassign reported deaths in Arizona counties originally listed as unknown.

National Vital Statistics Report, Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2000. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 10/2001.

Figure 2 depicts the five leading causes of hospitalizations among older adults in non-federal facilities in Yuma County, Arizona, and the United States, based on primary ICD9 diagnosis codes. While county and state data reflect hospitalizations during the year 2001, but because national hospital discharge data are not currently available for 2001, U.S. data for the year 2000 are included for the purpose of a general comparison. Federal facilities, such as Indian Health Services and Veterans Affairs hospitals, are not included within these data, and care must be given when considering hospitalizations within these populations. Also hospitalization data do not include treatment in emergency departments or outpatient facilities. Additionally, it is important to note that hospital discharge data describe the number of hospitalizations, rather than individuals; one individual may be represented multiple times within the data if that individual was hospitalized on multiple occasions within the same year.

FIGURE 2: FIVE LEADING CAUSES OF HOSPITALIZATION AMONG ADULTS AGE 65 AND OLDER; HOSPITALIZATION RATE PER 100,000



Source: 2001 Hospital Discharge Data. Arizona Department of Health Services.

Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics, 2000 National Hospital Discharge Survey. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 6/2002.

The national hospitalization rate in 2000 was higher than the 2001 rates reported for both Yuma County and Arizona for all categories, excluding hospitalizations due to symptoms, signs, and ill-defined conditions, in which the national 2000 rate is considerably less than the rates reported for the county and state in 2001. Yuma County reported lower hospitalization rate than Arizona for all categories, with the exception of hospitalizations due to diseases of the circulatory system, in which Yuma County reported 3% higher rate than Arizona in 2001. In considering diseases of the circulatory, digestive, and respiratory systems individually, the leading medical condition within each category resulting in hospitalization for older adults countywide was heart disease, gastrointestinal hemorrhage, and bronchitis, respectively. Within the injury and poisoning category, hip fractures were the most frequently diagnosed medical condition, and falls were reported as the main cause of injury. Chest pain was the leading cause of hospitalization among 65 and older adults within the symptoms, signs, and ill-defined conditions category. The average length of stay in the hospital among older adults in Yuma County was 5.1 days, compared to 4.7 days for Arizona and 6.0 days nationally (year 2000 data). The average hospitalization cost for Yuma County seniors in 2001 was \$16,068, compared to \$21,289 for the state; national figures are not available. Cumulative data indicates that Yuma County seniors incurred total hospitalization costs equaling \$99,958,719 for the year 2001.

Risk Factors

In considering leading chronic health conditions and mortality, it is important to keep in mind the role that risk factors play in health. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), established by the Centers for Disease Control, is a national telephone survey that polls individuals about specific high-risk behaviors, and is a useful tool in assessing the general health of the population.

Through the use of random dialing, the survey provides a representative cross-section of the national population. On a local level, however, the BRFSS is limited in its ability to represent the population, due to small sample sizes. Additionally, individuals not having a telephone within their household are excluded from participation, which in Arizona includes approximately 6% of the total population. **Thus, BRFSS data reported for the county is not representative of the county population as a whole, and caution must be used in interpreting data beyond the context of the surveyed population.** Despite their limitations, BRFSS data nonetheless provide general indicators about a community's health status. Table 2 describes demographic characteristics of the surveyed BRFSS population.

TABLE 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS ON THE BRFSS 2000, ADULTS 65+

	Yuma County	Arizona	United States
Number of respondents, ages 65+	34	624	34087
Gender			
Male	18 (52.9%)	245 (39.3%)	11913 (34.9%)
Female	16 (47.1%)	379 (60.7%)	22174 (65.1%)
Race/Ethnicity			
Caucasian, non-Hispanic	29 (85.3%)	566 (90.7%)	28915 (84.8%)
Hispanic	5 (14.7%)	45 (7.2%)	1977 (5.8%)
Black	0	5 (0.8%)	1764 (5.2%)
American Indian	0	5 (0.8%)	332 (1.0%)
Other	0	3 (0.5%)	1099 (3.2%)
Mean Age (Years)	74.3	73.8	74.0

Of the 34 older adults surveyed in Yuma County, 29.4% described their general health status as very good or excellent, compared to 41.3% for the state and 35.4% for the United States. Two surveyed adults (5.9%) in the county described their general health as poor, a lower rate than those reported for the state and the United States, 8.8% and 9.6% respectively.

Being overweight or obese, poor dietary habits, little or no physical activity, and tobacco use are all associated with an increase in health problems. As shown in Table 3, according to the 2000 BRFSS, 55.8% of the surveyed older

adults in Yuma County are classified as overweight or obese by national health standards, yet only 26.5% of respondents reported current attempts at losing weight. Nearly half of the respondents in Yuma County (47.0%) reported that they did not consume the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and 44.1% reported being physically inactive. The remaining 55.9% of respondents reported participating in a physical activity, although only 26.5% of respondents exercised at the recommended activity level of 20 minutes or more on 3 or more days per week. This is less than the state and national reported figures of 35.9% and 37.3%, respectively. The most popular activities among older adults, as reported on the statewide 2000 BRFSS, are walking,

gardening, golf, aerobics, and bicycling. Also in 2000, 2.9% of surveyed adults in Yuma County reported that they are current daily smokers, a lower incidence than reported for the state and the nation, 7.4% and 7.9%, respectively. None of the daily smokers reported attempts at quitting smoking, with at least 1 day of non-smoking within the past year, compared to the state and national rates of 41.3% and 40.9%, respectively, although the small sample size must be taken into consideration when evaluating this observation.

**TABLE 3: RISK FACTORS AMONG RESPONDENTS AGE 65 AND OLDER;
BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY, 2000**

	Yuma County	Arizona	United States
Weight Group¹			
Normal weight	38.2%	46.8%	42.5%
Overweight	38.2%	35.1%	36.7%
Obese	17.6%	17.0%	16.8%
Unknown	5.9%	1.1%	4.0%
Daily Servings of Fruits and Vegetables			
Less than once a day or never	0.0%	1.4%	3.3%
1 to less than 3 times per day	23.5%	16.8%	21.9%
3 to less than 5 times per day	23.5%	38.8%	43.3%
5 or more times per day	52.9%	42.9%	31.5%
Activity level/exercise²			
Physically inactive	44.1%	37.5%	37.0%
Less than recommended activity	29.4%	26.6%	25.7%
Meets recommended activity level	26.5%	35.9%	37.3%
Smoking status			
Current smoker, smoke everyday	2.9%	7.4%	7.9%
Current smoker, smoke some days	0.0%	1.9%	2.1%
Former smoker	38.2%	41.3%	37.4%
Never smoked	52.9%	48.7%	52.1%
Don't know/refused question	5.9%	0.6%	0.5%

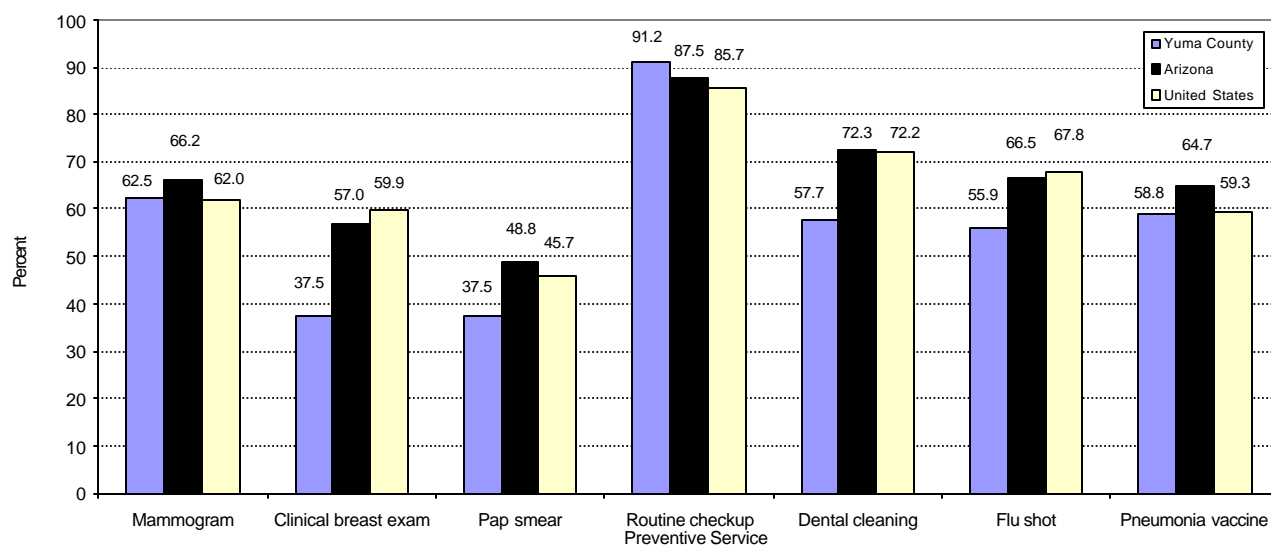
¹Based on Body Mass Index, BMI<25.0 normal weight, BMI 25.0 and < 30.0 overweight, BMI 30.0 obese

²Recommended activity is exercise 3 or more days per week for 20 minutes or more

Preventive Care

The use of preventive care services provides an effective means for maintaining or improving individual health status, and is especially important for the aging population. Yearly screenings for older adults are recommended for a number of healthcare services. Figure 3 demonstrates the use of such services among those age 65 years and older adults within the past year, as reported on the BRFSS. The percentage for pneumococcal vaccine is reported for individuals receiving the vaccine at any point in their life.

FIGURE 3: PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS 65+ BY RECOMMENDED PREVENTIVE SERVICES USE; BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY, 2000



Among all survey respondents, “obtaining a yearly medical checkup” was the highest reported use of a preventive service, with a rate of almost 92% among Yuma County respondents, compared to 87.5% and 85.7% for Arizona and the United States, respectively. While yearly dental cleaning was also highly reported among state and national respondents, a rate of approximately 72% for both regions, interviewees in Yuma County reported considerably less dental preventive care, with only 57.7% of respondents reporting having a dental cleaning within the past year. Although influenza and pneumonia comprised the fifth leading cause of death among older adults in Yuma County during 2001, BRFSS data indicate that Yuma County respondents reported fewer vaccinations than state and national respondents. Approximately 67% of state and national survey participants obtained a flu shot in the past year, compared to 55.9% of Yuma County respondents. A slightly lower rate, 58.8% of respondents, was reported for obtaining a pneumococcal vaccine at some point in their life, compared to 64.7% and 59.3% reported for the state and the nation, respectively.

In the category of women’s health, female respondents in Yuma County reported a similar rate as national respondents (approximately 62%) for obtaining a mammogram in the past year, compared to 66.2% of statewide participants. Considerably fewer county respondents (37.5%) reported having a breast exam performed by a health professional within the past year, compared to 57.0% statewide and 59.9% nationally. Yearly Pap smears were obtained by fewer than 50% of all county, state, and national female respondents, although Yuma County female respondents again reported considerably less use than state and national respondents, 37.5% countywide, versus 48.8% for the state and 45.7% nationally.

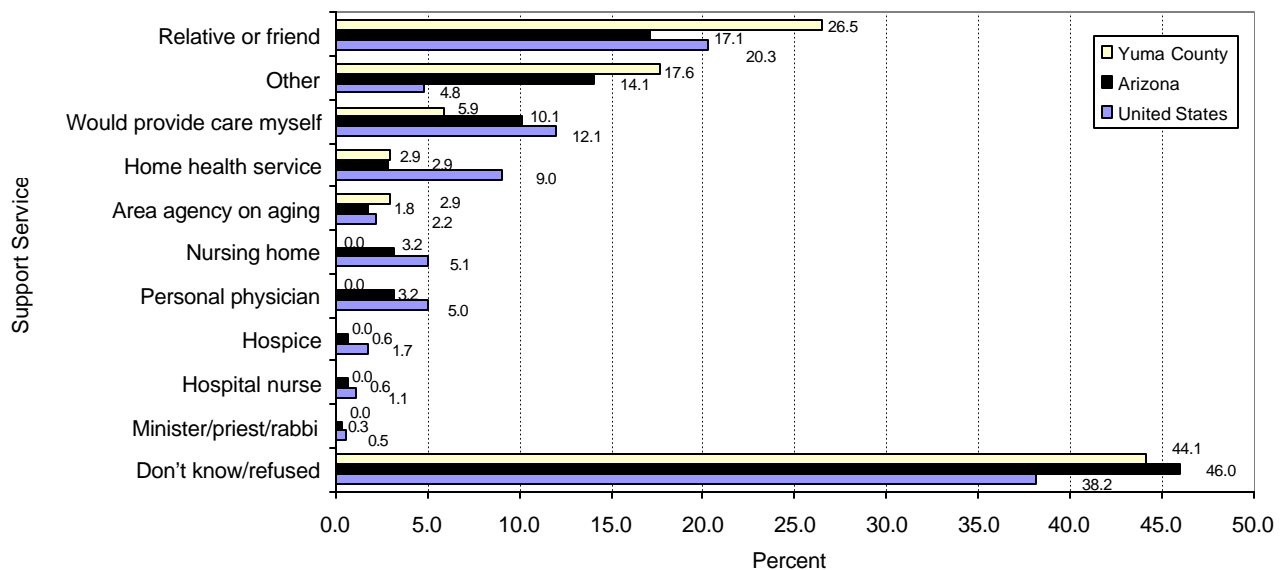
Mental Health and Support Services

According to BRFSS 2000 data, older respondents in Yuma County reported an average of 2.4 days during the past month when their mental health was “not good”, in comparison to 1.7 days reported for Arizona and 2.1 days reported nationally. When questioned about more specific indicators of mental health status, for example feeling depressed, anxious, or not well-rested, 26.5% of older respondents in Yuma County reported having at least 14 days of poor emotional health within the past month, compared to 23.7% of state and 22.3% of national respondents. While BRFSS data are by no means a clinical diagnosis of mental condition, 14 or more days of poor emotional health may indicate a need to seek professional attention.

Despite the proportion of older BRFSS respondents reporting poor emotional health, ADHS data indicate that only 0.5% of the population aged 60 and older received mental health treatment in 2000 through Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (RBHAs). RBHAs are community-based organizations contracted by ADHS that provide a variety of mental health services, predominately to individuals suffering from serious mental illnesses. Although these data only describe use of public mental health programs excluding treatment provided by private agencies or personal physicians, it is nonetheless clear that many older adults in Arizona are not utilizing available mental health support services.

Support services potentially serve an important function in the daily lives of older adults who are unable to care for themselves. However, as shown in Figure 4, based on the 2000 BRFSS, nearly 45% of county and state respondents did not know who to call for assistance in the event that an elderly friend or relative required care. Although there are public services available to the aging community, less than 6% of the older respondents in Yuma County thought of these services as a resource for needed care.

FIGURE 4: PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS 65+ BY PLANNED USE OF SUPPORT SERVICES ; BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SURVEY, 2000



BRFSS 2000: “Who would you call to arrange short or long-term care in the home for an elderly relative or friend who was no longer able to care for themselves?”

Survey participants were also questioned about their own need for assistance with personal care needs (e.g. eating, bathing) or routine needs (e.g. household chores, shopping). Eight individuals responded to these questions in Yuma County. Of those, six people responded that they did not need help with personal care needs; the remaining respondents indicated that immediate family members provided the necessary care. Four individuals responded that they needed assistance with routine tasks, and all four respondents reported receiving help from immediate family members. Public services were not cited by any county respondent, although the small sample size must be considered in evaluating this observation. Statewide and nationally, public services were more frequently mentioned responses. In both regions, use of a paid employee or home health agency was the most often cited public service utilized for both personal care and routine needs.

Healthy Aging 2010

Working with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private community-based programs, the Healthy Aging 2010 plan will “connect the dots” to the many activities and programs currently available to meet the needs of older Arizonans. For communities already engaged in health-related projects, it is hoped that this report will provide updated information on older adult health in Yuma County. For communities not yet formally involved in such activities, hopefully this report will encourage interest and dialogue around initiating such projects. To learn more about the Healthy Aging 2010 plan, please contact Ramona Rusinak at (602) 542-1223 or visit the Healthy Aging 2010 website at <http://www.hs.state.az.us/phs/healthyaging2010/index.htm>.

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